



State of Wisconsin  
**Department of Health and Family Services**

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## **Wisconsin's Influenza Preparedness Plan**

The Department's public health staff monitors a variety of viruses and other diseases throughout the world. Wisconsin created a response in 2001 to specifically address any possible influenza pandemic. It defines the role of state and local government in order to help control the spread of bird flu among humans.

Wisconsin's response includes:

- **Surveillance:** Wisconsin's criteria for testing people for bird flu exceed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. We test sick individuals for bird flu if there is a possibility they were exposed to the virus, such as travelers who recently returned from southeast Asia and are now exhibiting flu-like symptoms. Since January 2004, Wisconsin has tested 17 people that have met the criteria and none of these people tested positive for the bird flu.
- **Infection Control:** Isolation and quarantine are infection control measures that could be used during a pandemic. Isolation is an effective tool at the onset of an outbreak because sick individuals are separated in order to prevent the spread of the virus. Isolation rooms would be used in hospitals, nursing homes and any other facilities that would be caring for the sick. Facilities, such as nursing homes and hospitals, may already isolate individuals when they become ill during the typical flu season. Isolation also includes people voluntarily staying home from work or school if they are sick during an outbreak.

Quarantine could also be used, but it requires segregating an entire area or population and would need to be enforced in order to be effective. The state public health officer or local public health departments have the statutory authority to quarantine.

In addition, people could protect themselves through good hygiene. Frequent hand washing, covering your mouth and nose when you cough, staying home if you are ill, and staying away from others that are sick are all ways to protect yourself from catching influenza or spreading it to others.

- **Sufficient Medical Services:** In the event of a pandemic, hospitals would have the increased capacity to manage patients by reconfiguring rooms or floors to enable the hospital to care for patients with influenza.

Through the Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry, state and local governments would have access to medical professionals that volunteer to help in hospitals and other organizations.

All hospitals in Wisconsin have signed agreements to provide assistance to one another during a sustained incident, such as an influenza pandemic. In addition, local planners have been identifying places and other locations where hospitals could move patients or house additional beds, if necessary.

Many communities throughout the state have already been performing exercises in order to be prepared if a pandemic should occur.

Visit [http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/preparedness/pdf\\_files/WIPandemicInfluenzaPlan.pdf](http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/preparedness/pdf_files/WIPandemicInfluenzaPlan.pdf) to view Wisconsin's influenza pandemic plan.

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